

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Friday, March 4, 2022

Senate Bill 184: AN ACT EXTENDING THROUGH NOVEMBER 8, 2022, SEVERAL CHANGES REGARDING ELECTION ADMINISTRATION AS A RESULT OF COVID-19 AND CONCERNING ELIGIBILITY TO VOTE BY ABSENTEE BALLOT - Support

House Bill 5262: AN ACT REVISING CERTAIN ABSENTEE VOTING ELIGIBILITY STATUTES - Support

Senator Flexer, Representative Fox, Senator Sampson, Representative Mastrofrancesco, and distinguished members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee. My name is Travis Woodward, I am a resident of Hamden, and an engineer in the Connecticut Department of Transportation. I am also the president of CSEA SEIU Local 2001, a labor union representing over 23,000 state, municipal, board of education, active and retired, public and private sector workers. I offer the following testimony in support of Senate Bill 184 and House Bill 5262:

The two bills before you will ensure that no one in our great state has to choose between exercising their right to vote and being cautious about protecting their health. Seniors, the immunocompromised, and everyone else in Connecticut should be able to cast their ballot free from the fear of getting sick. These bills will help make that possible by allowing registered voters to use an absentee ballot.

Allowing registered voters to vote by mail is something our state should have done years ago. The elections held in Connecticut during the pandemic with expanded access to absentee voting have shown that voting by mail works, is secure, and is an option that residents embrace. I love going to the polling place to cast my vote, but that does not change the fact that absentee voting should be allowable under Connecticut law for any qualified voter who wants to make use of it.

In Connecticut and throughout the country, there were a record number of votes cast by mail ballot during the 2020 election. And, our state and our country handled that exceptionally well. Some people mistakenly raise the specter of voter fraud, but in fact, the United State Department of Homeland Security's Election Infrastructure Government Coordinating Council (GCC) said that the "The November 3rd election was the most secure in American history."

Senate Bill 184 and House Bill 5262 will mean more people will vote in our elections, and that is a very good thing. In a democracy, the goal should always be to ensure that everyone who wants to vote can vote and that every vote is counted properly. I urge you to support Senate Bill 184 and House Bill 5262.

I thank you for hearing my testimony.

Travis Woodward
President, CSEA SEIU Local 2001